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STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations", provides a comprehensive framework for the provision of humanitarian relief assistance, both in terms of the guiding principles and the modalities for relief assistance, including its coordination. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 2 of the resolution, which requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. In accordance with paragraph 36 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), which officially began functioning on 1 April 1992. Mr. Jan Eliasson was appointed as the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Other arrangements called for under resolution 46/182, such as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, were similarly established.

3. The new Department has now been in existence seven months. While this is a relatively short period, it has coincided with an extraordinary increase in civil and ethnic strife, requiring ever increasing humanitarian relief assistance from the United Nations. This report reviews experiences in the establishment and utilization of the instruments provided by General Assembly resolution 46/182 for enhancing coordination, effectiveness and timeliness of United Nations response to emergencies, the management of humanitarian assistance at the policy and the country levels, including the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development. The report also attempts to reflect on what lessons can be learned and how the conceptual framework provided by the General Assembly can be reinforced.

II. GENERAL OVERVIEW

4. The strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the provision of humanitarian assistance is a timely development taking into account the forces which have been unleashed by the end of the cold war, the unabated growth of world population, the deterioration in the environment, and the continuation of economic crisis conditions, not least among the developing countries. Member States have recognized that the provision of humanitarian assistance is one of the principal responsibilities of the United Nations. In providing relief assistance, the United Nations is guided at all times by the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, as well as the need for access to the population in need. In providing humanitarian assistance, the United Nations also ensures the full respect of the sovereignty of States by obtaining the consent of the country concerned. At the same time, the responsibility of Governments for their own population in need is an accepted one.

5. Regardless of circumstances, the international community has the obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed, including in conflict situations, whether or not there is a political solution, and, in some instances, even before security arrangements can be put into place. The need for unimpeded access to affected populations is fundamental, as recognized by General Assembly resolution 46/182. This requires the cooperation and commitment of all parties concerned.

6. The provision of humanitarian assistance has the potential to create a positive environment for improving security conditions, thus providing an opportunity for addressing underlying political problems. Efforts of the United Nations to create time-limited and geographically restricted cease-fires, zones of peace or areas of tranquillity for delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as to secure safe access to those in need can facilitate the building of confidence necessary for the success of the United Nations in peacemaking and peace-keeping. The Secretariat is engaged in closely coordinated efforts, particularly between DHA, the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, to ensure a complementary approach to these distinct but clearly related activities which should become ever more mutually reinforcing.

7. Increasingly, the delivery of humanitarian assistance has to be carried out under difficult and dangerous security conditions. On several occasions in recent months, the Security Council specifically addressed this matter in connection with its consideration of the situation in Somalia and in former Yugoslavia.

A. Department of Humanitarian Affairs

8. New demands for emergency humanitarian assistance underline the need to assess the scope of international response and continue to refine the modalities for coordinating it. The establishment of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was designed to strengthen a coordinated and coherent system-wide approach.

9. The new Department was staffed through the redeployment of resources, combining the former Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) in Geneva with other existing capacities within the United Nations. The Department, both in New York and Geneva, is also supported by seconded staff made available by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The secondment has enabled the Department to benefit from the experiences of these organizations in its day-to-day work, thus enhancing its capacity to coordinate and to achieve a system-wide approach in response to emergency situations.

10. DHA has offices in New York and in Geneva, and has endeavoured to establish a practical allocation of responsibilities and delineation of tasks between these two offices. It is possible, however, that this functional delineation between the two offices will continue to evolve as more experience is accumulated and lessons drawn.

11. In New York, the Department has concentrated on policy issues pertaining to the response of the international community to emergencies, taking into account the important interrelationship between humanitarian activities of the United Nations and those relating to peacemaking and peace-keeping. This is also reflected in the increasing attention that is being given to humanitarian issues by the Security Council. One central function of DHA-New York is to monitor closely developments and acts on early warning information. It formulates, in close consultation with relevant departments and organizations of the United Nations system, the policy, strategy and plan to address each emergency. The Department frequently exercises humanitarian diplomacy in order to secure access by relief organizations to the affected populations. It also promotes efforts to address the root causes of emergencies and facilitate the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development. In order to ensure prompt and timely response to emergencies, DHA-New York manages the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to facilitate the immediate availability of resources to the operational organizations. New York also provides substantive support for the deliberations of relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations and serves as a focal point for systematic dissemination of information on humanitarian assistance.

12. The Geneva office is responsible for all matters relating to natural disasters, including relief mobilization and coordination as well as disaster mitigation. It is also the focal point for operational coordination and support in complex emergency situations, including organization of inter-agency needs assessments and the preparation of consolidated appeals. DHA-Geneva monitors the follow-up, identifies unmet needs, and prepares updated situation reports in close cooperation with all the partners in a particular programme. These include the donors, the United Nations agencies and organizations concerned, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, DHA-Geneva provides technical support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and its Working Group. Under the overall structure of the Geneva office, special units have been established to deal with the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa, the Drought Emergency in Southern Africa (DESA) and the inter-agency humanitarian programme for Iraq. A special unit to deal with financial and other reporting regarding humanitarian assistance for ex-Yugoslavia may be set up, subject to receipt of adequate resources. In addition, close cooperation with the secretariat of the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan (UNOCA) in Geneva has been established. In the area of disaster mitigation, DHA-Geneva continues to enhance its preparedness and prevention strategy which has developed progressively over the years.

13. Following the establishment of DHA, the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction became an integral part of the Department. In integrating this secretariat into the overall framework of the Department, the spirit of General Assembly resolution 46/236 was fully respected by ensuring its separate identity and functions while at the same time making arrangements for it to work closely with the Disaster Mitigation Branch of the Department. The work of the Decade secretariat represents an important contribution by the scientific community to forge a cooperative relationship with the United Nations in this very important field of disaster prevention and preparedness. While a number of difficulties have been encountered in getting the structure of the secretariat in place, it is now expected that the necessary procedures will be completed shortly and a Director will be appointed. The Decade secretariat will continue to concentrate on mobilizing scientific and academic communities through national committees in order to raise public consciousness and build indigenous capacity to promote the objective of disaster prevention and preparedness. The Disaster Mitigation Branch of DHA will continue to provide technical expertise for disaster mitigation through development and execution of specific projects. Every effort will be made to ensure that they work closely together to ensure complementarity in their activities.

14. In its response to specific emergencies, the United Nations has had to grapple with a number of functional issues. Included among them are mechanisms for early warning pertaining to situations requiring emergency humanitarian assistance; disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and management; systematic information-gathering and dissemination regarding emergencies; the continuum between relief and development; and modalities of assistance to internally displaced persons.

15. In response to the General Assembly's call for the joint DHA-UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme to be strengthened and broadened, the programme's scope has been expanded to cover 70 disaster-prone developing countries. In this manner, some 3,000 persons will receive training by June 1994. Five regional and 17 country workshops have been held in four developing regions. The programme has received special contributions from countries, totalling approximately $2.75 million, and utilizes staff drawn from DHA, UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and the World Health Organization (WHO) as trainers.

16. The Department has also launched initiatives to improve systems preparedness. In this context, work has started on establishing a Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities: two parts of the Register, namely, the Directory of Emergency Response Officers and the Directory of International Search and Rescue Teams, are already in existence; others are being developed, in particular the Register of Stockpiles of Disaster Relief Items and the Register of Disaster Management Expertise. Furthermore, a discussion on the use, at request, of military and civil defence assets in sudden natural disasters has been initiated. Measures have been taken to strengthen the participation of other United Nations agencies in the activities of the DHA-UNDRO warehouse in Pisa, Italy.

17. On the basis of the past activities of UNDRO, DHA is in the process of establishing a register of stand-by capacity encompassing available resources, both inside and outside the United Nations system, to be drawn upon in cases of emergency. Consultations with interested Governments have continued with a view to determining procedures for assessing capacity outside the United Nations system. Activities to improve DHA's capabilities with regard to needs assessment, operational coordination, and field communications have also been pursued in this connection. Consultations have also been undertaken with relevant partners, such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the Council of Europe, for cooperation in emergency preparedness and response.

18. With respect to the relief-to-development continuum, steps have been taken to bring development and related financial organizations, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), into the early stages of planning of humanitarian assistance, especially in the design of relief programmes, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and long-term sustainable development. This kind of strategic planning is especially important given limitations on available resources. The involvement of development and financial organizations has helped in planning DHA's activities in the Horn of Africa and in southern Africa. Discussions are continuing about cooperation in other emergency situations. DHA is also discussing with programmes and departments within the United Nations dealing with development issues, primarily UNDP and the Department of Economic and Social Development, how to institute concrete arrangements to better synchronize relief and development efforts at the field level. Strong working relationships are similarly being developed with other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

19. Following the establishment of the Department, the Administrative Committee on Coordination's Ad Hoc Working Group on Early Warning regarding New Flows of Refugees and Displaced Persons designated DHA as the focal point of the new consultative mechanism proposed by the Group in its final report. It is expected that this inter-agency mechanism, attached as a subsidiary organ to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, will begin to function in 1993. This early warning role, serving both the purposes of prevention and preparedness, will enhance the effective functioning of DHA in crisis situations, and will strengthen the United Nations system's capacity in identifying and addressing at an early stage the root causes of emergency situations.

20. In several countries, land-mines are a key impediment to the effective provision of humanitarian assistance. DHA, in consultation with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, has requested information from the United Nations system to determine the magnitude of the problem, the nature and extent of ongoing demining activities and United Nations experience with the mine-clearing task. The information thus collected will be discussed by an ad hoc task force before the end of 1992.

B. Central Emergency Revolving Fund

21. The General Assembly, in resolution 46/182, called for the establishment of a Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) to enable operational organizations to ensure prompt response to emergencies. On 22 May 1992, CERF became operational, having reached its target of $50 million in pledges with contributions from 25 Member States. Guidelines and financial procedure for the use of CERF have been established indicating how agencies can initiate the use of the Fund and how it is to be subsequently replenished. A number of disbursements have already been made. The sum of $2 million was provided to UNICEF to assist vulnerable groups in Kenya, as part of the overall effort of the United Nations in the Horn of Africa. In connection with the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, $5 million was advanced to UNICEF, $0.5 million was disbursed to the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia, $2 million was approved for WHO projects, and $1.6 million was made available to FAO. A request for disbursement to cover immediate humanitarian needs in the former Yugoslavia, including needs for shelter, is anticipated. DHA will monitor the responses to various consolidated appeals and ensure the timely reimbursement of the Fund.

C. Inter-Agency Standing Committee

22. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee, envisaged in General Assembly resolution 46/182 as an important tool for system-wide coordination, has become operational, with the participation of UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, FAO and WHO. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IFRC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have also been associated with the work of the Standing Committee, and representatives of non-governmental organizations have been invited to participate on an ad hoc basis. The Standing Committee has so far been convened twice in Geneva and once in New York. These meetings have addressed policy issues relating to the United Nations response to emergencies, especially arrangements for coordination and cooperation. The Standing Committee will hold regular semi-annual meetings and also convene when a situation calls for urgent consultations.

23. An Inter-Agency Working Group was established for regular consultations in Geneva at the middle-management level. An Inter-Agency Support Unit has been established as part of DHA-Geneva to provide the necessary secretariat support. Non-government organizations are associated with the work of the Working Group and the Inter-Agency Support Unit.

24. In New York, ad hoc interdepartmental/inter-agency meetings have been organized at the working level to address policy issues relating to specific emergency situations.

D. Consolidated appeals

25. The process of consolidated appeals called for in General Assembly resolution 46/182 has been employed to prepare and launch appeals outlining the United Nations response to particular emergencies and identifying resources requested. Consolidated appeals prepared over the past six months have been the result of consultations amongst relevant United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and DHA, bearing in mind the need for a coherent system-wide approach with clear indication of priority activities. These have started in the field with inter-agency assessment missions and have been finalized in inter-agency forums in Geneva. The experiences of including the non-governmental organizations in this process are positive. The full participation of non-governmental organizations in preparing the 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia could become a model for future involvement of such organizations in the process. Under the aegis of the Department, needs assessments were carried out and consolidated inter-agency appeals were launched in the last six months in the following cases:

(a) Consolidated United Nations-Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Appeal for the Drought Emergency in Southern Africa (DESA);

(b) Consolidated Appeal for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance for Afghanistan;

(c) Special Consolidated United Nations Inter-Agency Appeal for Kenya;

(d) Updated Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa;

(e) United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Programme of Action and Appeal for Former Yugoslavia;

(f) Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme - Plan of Action for Iraq (1 July 1992-31 March 1993).

An appeal for Haiti as well as a winter programme and an updated consolidated appeal for Afghanistan are being prepared. It is anticipated that appeals also would be used for assistance to Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as Tajikistan.

26. In situations less complex than those requiring the issuance of a full consolidated inter-agency appeal, DHA has monitored the formulation of emergency programme funding requests by individual United Nations agencies.

III. REVIEW OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

27. DHA has begun to monitor world-wide developments with a view to providing early warning and mobilizing resources for effective and timely humanitarian responses to natural and man-made emergencies, drawing upon existing capacities of relevant organizations and entities of the United Nations system, national institutions of interested Member States and non-governmental organizations. During the first months of its operation, the Department has been called upon to address emergencies in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, along the Bangladesh/Myanmar border, in Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nagorno-Karabakh, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslavia. During the same period, its relief coordination activities have been required in relation to several natural disasters, and a major programme has been put into place for the countries affected by the drought in southern Africa.

28. DHA has forged close relationships with relevant United Nations organizations in the humanitarian and related areas with a view to enhancing the capacity of the United Nations system to act quickly and forcefully in humanitarian crises. This has entailed the development of coordination mechanisms, both at Headquarters and at the field level. Mechanisms for coordination will be reviewed and fine-tuned as further experience yields lessons about the strengths, weaknesses and gaps in the system and about the most appropriate methods for assuring access, the safety of relief personnel and the secure transport of supplies.

29. Efforts in Africa have focused on the Horn of Africa (especially Somalia, Kenya and the Sudan), southern Africa (in particular Mozambique), and Liberia. The humanitarian situation in these areas has continued to deteriorate. Drought has struck many areas and disease and starvation continue to spread. Debilitating civil strife has resulted in further large-scale displacement and has exacerbated the competition for scarce resources.

30. The challenges of access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to emergency-affected peoples in the Horn of Africa have been daunting. Civil strife and massive population displacements have not only made the provision of assistance highly complex politically and operationally, but have frequently placed the lives of relief workers in jeopardy.

31. DHA, in cooperation with United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, has endeavoured to alert the international community to the needs of emergency-affected peoples through a series of regionally and country-based consolidated appeals. A special appeal for Kenya in June 1992 (partly related to the Somalia refugee situation) was followed one month later by a Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa Appeal Update. While these efforts have generally elicited a positive response from the donor community, the difficulty of access to the peoples in need remains in many instances. Civil strife in the Horn of Africa continues to hamper relief deliveries significantly.

32. DHA will continue to undertake the necessary negotiations to enable humanitarian relief agencies to have greater access to people in need. In this regard, the pledge to comply fully with humanitarian law and the commitments to the fundamental right of people to receive humanitarian assistance made by the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Countries of the Horn of Africa, held at Addis Ababa on 8 and 9 April 1992 (see A/47/182, annex), will serve as an important basis upon which to develop new approaches for assisting those afflicted.

33. Somalia has been one of the most difficult and challenging assignments of the United Nations and the world community. Rarely in the history of the United Nations have United Nations relief organizations been requested to provide humanitarian assistance in a situation that has verged so near to the brink of anarchy. The Somalia operation highlights fundamental issues of increasing relevance in international relations, including the relationship between political, security and humanitarian objectives. The safe delivery of humanitarian assistance is an important first step to be followed by political reconciliation at the regional level among political and clan leaders, and subsequently reconciliation at the national level.

34. Four years of civil war, against a backdrop of years of neglect and lack of investment in human development, basic services and infrastructure, have left Somalia in ruins. Further aggravated by the drought, the situation in most parts of the country has continued to deteriorate. By early 1992, it was estimated that almost 4.5 million people were threatened by severe malnutrition and related disease, and 1.5 million lives were immediately at risk.

35. The conflict has plunged the country into a nightmare of insecurity, which, in turn, has hampered the delivery of vitally needed humanitarian assistance and increasingly threatened the safety of relief workers. The United Nations officially evacuated from Somalia in September 1991. UNICEF was authorized by the Secretary-General to resume limited operations in Mogadishu in December 1991. In March 1992, the United Nations resumed its relief operation in Mogadishu, when a cease-fire was successfully negotiated between the two contesting factions. A United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia was appointed.

36. DHA, in cooperation with relief agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, developed a 90-Day Plan of Action for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia. Together with the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, the deployment of a unit of 50 United Nations Observers to monitor the peace plan in Mogadishu and the agreement in principle to deploy a 500-member security force to protect relief goods and personnel in Mogadishu, the plan was endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 751 (1992) of 24 April 1992. The 90-Day Plan of Action was further elaborated in the updated SEPHA appeal in July 1992.

37. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs led a high-level inter-agency mission to Somalia in mid-September 1992. The mission concluded with a commitment from participating organizations to strengthen their presence and to accelerate their relief activities in Somalia. Steps to improve coordination arrangements in the field were also agreed upon. The outcome of the mission was subsequently translated into the 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia. The Programme was launched by an international coordination meeting of Member States, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations on 12 and 13 October at Geneva. A follow-up meeting on the implementation of the 100-Day Action Programme with the participation of key representatives of various Somali groupings will be held at Addis Ababa on 30 November and 1 December.

38. In order to expedite its effective implementation, the United Nations appointed Mr. Philip Johnston, President of CARE (USA), to serve as the Operational Manager for the implementation of the 100-Day Action Programme. He will work within the framework of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) under the overall leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, and in support of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia.

39. The 100-Day Action Programme is the result of close cooperation between the United Nations, United Nations operational agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organizations. This partnership is essential not only for implementing the Programme, but also for paving the way for the next phase of recovery and rehabilitation in Somalia. The success of the Programme will also depend on the arrangements to ensure sufficient security for the delivery and distribution of emergency relief assistance. In that respect, the Programme will become an important test of the international community's ability to provide humanitarian aid in conditions of extreme political fragility.

40. Emergency relief operations in the Sudan continue to pose serious challenges for the United Nations. The civil conflict that has afflicted the country escalated in 1992. Furthermore, there was splitting and factional fighting within the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). This caused a sizeable increase in displaced persons in various parts of southern Sudan as well as refugees in neighbouring countries. One of the main and consistent concerns of the United Nations is to achieve full compliance by all parties with the principles and commitments of the Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), particularly the fundamental obligation to give the United Nations access to all civilians in need of relief assistance. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs visited the Sudan in September 1992 and discussed with the Government as well as with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) procedures for the prompt and effective distribution of relief assistance. Agreement was reached on 21 destinations for airlift of relief supplies into Southern Sudan. The Government of the Sudan also committed itself to facilitate procedures for entry, travel and work of non-governmental organizations. Consultations were also held in Nairobi with SPLA representatives on OLS arrangements, with similar agreements reached on

access. A special emissary of the United Nations will visit the Sudan in the near future to follow up the implementation of these agreements.

41. In view of indications that the southern part of Africa would be struck by extreme drought conditions, DHA, with the cooperation of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the operational agencies of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and concerned non-governmental organizations, formulated a joint United Nations/SADC appeal to meet the anticipated needs of the many drought victims in southern Africa. Following the official launching of the Consolidated Appeal by the President of Botswana on behalf of SADC at Gabarone and by the Secretary-General in New York on 26 May 1992, a formal pledging conference took place at Geneva on 1 and 2 June 1992. These brought pledges amounting to about $570 million of the $854 million sought.

42. With regard to organizational and operational matters related to the drought emergency in southern Africa, a number of essential coordination mechanisms are in place. The WFP/SADC Regional Logistics Advisory Centre established at Harare is operational and a United Nations Regional Coordinator for Logistics and Food Transport has been designated. The Resident Coordinator in Harare functions as the focal point for counterparts stationed in the other drought-affected countries of the region. The United Nations/SADC Drought Emergency Unit in Southern Africa, which has been established within DHA-Geneva, provides comprehensive monthly situation reports and collaborates with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee mechanisms.

43. DHA works closely with the countries concerned, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Programme. With the support and participation of SADC and OAU, the joint DHA-UNDP Disaster Management Training Programme conducted a workshop at Harare for representatives from a number of drought-affected countries in southern Africa.

44. The implementation of the drought emergency programme in southern Africa is linked to the response of the international community to the Consolidated United Nations/SADC Appeal. The slow conversion of donor pledges into actual disbursements and shipments has in this regard had adverse effects on the United Nations relief effort in southern Africa, where the urgent needs of some of the region's smaller countries have yet to be adequately addressed. The declining response to the non-food requirements contained in the joint United Nations/SADC Appeal is also a source of concern, as are the disparities in the relative amounts contributed to recipient countries. These unmet needs, together with the anticipated increase in requirements as a result of the deterioration in many of the affected countries, may require the convening of a follow-up donors' meeting in the near future.

45. In this context, and among the drought-affected countries of the region, Mozambique is a special case. The combined effects of both the drought and civil strife have created a situation where emergency relief is required for more than 3 million people in Mozambique. Furthermore, in the light of the

Joint Declaration on Humanitarian Assistance, signed in Rome on 16 July 1992 on behalf of the Government of Mozambique and Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), the envisaged expansion of the programme of humanitarian assistance to previously inaccessible RENAMO-held areas will substantially increase relief needs to be met.

46. The peace agreement for Mozambique signed in Rome on 4 October 1992 between the Government of Mozambique and RENAMO establishes a pivotal role for the United Nations. It, inter alia, calls for the United Nations to give immediate priority to coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance required by Mozambique. A DHA mission was dispatched to Mozambique in October in order to devise mechanisms to ensure a comprehensive United Nations response to the emergency situation and to expedite the opening of land corridors for the delivery of relief to the most vulnerable communities. These mechanisms will constitute parts of the overall United Nations operations in Mozambique, for which the Secretary-General on 12 October appointed an Interim Special Representative for Mozambique. Presently, DHA, working closely with other departments and agencies of the United Nations, plans to set in motion a new comprehensive relief effort for Mozambique. This effort will require effective cooperation and coordination, as well as adequate financial support, since both the needs and the conditions for the delivery of relief aid are extraordinary.

47. The signing of a peace accord for Angola in May 1991 set the stage for multifaceted assistance by the United Nations in peace-keeping, election monitoring, military demobilization and humanitarian assistance. The second phase of the Special Relief Programme for Angola (SRPA-II), launched in December 1991, combined emergency food and medical relief with assistance for the reintegration of people affected by the war and longer-term rehabilitation of infrastructure and basic services. However, implementation of the non-food and rehabilitative components of SRPA-II was limited by serious resource shortfalls. During the post-election period efforts will be made to mobilize adequate support for these elements, which are crucial to consolidating the peace and building the foundation for the resumption of development.

48. For Liberia, the United Nations system continued to carry out a large-scale relief operation, including relief activities for over 1 million refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, in cooperation with local and international non-governmental organizations. Within Liberia, these activities were coordinated by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Emergency Relief Operations in Monrovia. Owing to delays affecting the peace efforts sponsored by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as to the resumption of armed hostilities in August 1992, the emphasis remained on basic relief activities. None the less, planning for recovery and rehabilitation programmes has been initiated.

49. In April 1992, DHA assumed responsibility for the coordination of the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Iraq. The Memorandum of Understanding governing the inter-agency programme, including the deployment of the United Nations Guards Contingent, expired on 30 June 1992. At the invitation of the

Government of Iraq, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs visited Baghdad from 17 to 22 August 1992 to achieve the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding. While some progress was made, a final agreement could not be reached. Subsequently, negotiations continued during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to New York from 28 September to 2 October 1992. Finally, at the request of the Government of Iraq, negotiations were resumed in Baghdad from 14 to 17 October and an agreement ad referendum was reached on a new memorandum of understanding which provides a framework for a humanitarian programme in Iraq until 31 March 1993. The agreement was signed in New York on 22 October 1992.

50. With the winter rapidly approaching and because of the specific situation in northern Iraq, the Coordinator of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Programme in Iraq visited the region early in September 1992, accompanied by representatives of UNICEF and WFP. The visit confirmed the risk of a crisis and the need to take preventive action. On the basis of the findings of the inter-agency mission, a Winter Plan for Northern Iraq totalling over US$ 85,500,000 was drawn up early in October 1992 to meet the basic survival needs of most vulnerable groups.

51. During the discussions in Baghdad in October 1992, attention was also drawn to the needs of the civilian population in other parts of the country, including in particular the south. In consultations with the agencies represented in Iraq, a plan of action covering all of Iraq was prepared and agreed upon with the Government of Iraq. According to the plan, urgent requirements covering the period up to 31 March 1993 were estimated at $217 million with almost half of it going to the northern areas.

52. During the past six months, the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan has worsened, in particular in the Kabul area. At the request of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, a UNOCA-led inter-agency assessment mission visited Afghanistan from 11 to 15 May, to identify emergency humanitarian needs. Based on the mission's report, a consolidated appeal of $179.7 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for the period of 1 June to 31 December 1992 was launched on 5 June 1992 by DHA, in consultation with the operational agencies. Contributions amounting to less than one third of the funds required have since been received. The high rate of voluntarily returning refugees has stretched resources allocated for repatriation assistance. At the same time, increased mass movements inside the country have highlighted the urgency of mine-clearance and other emergency rehabilitation projects. Latest indications provide a sober warning that the people of Afghanistan will suffer greatly during another harsh winter. Basic needs must be met urgently to prevent the death of a great number of people. Prepositioning and other preparations for the winter are going forward, but are hindered by the lack of adequate funds under the Consolidated Appeal. Specific measures for the winter needs are now being considered.

53. In March the United Nations was requested by the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Myanmar to assist in the repatriation to Myanmar of about 200,000 Rohinga refugees in southern Bangladesh. The Secretary-General

asked the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to undertake a mission to the area, with the participation of UNHCR. The mission went to Bangladesh and Myanmar in the beginning of April. At the end of the visit, the Myanmar Government agreed to resume contact with the Bangladesh Government on the Foreign Minister level, to receive in Myanmar all those refugees who could provide evidence of residence in Myanmar and to a United Nations role, if needed, at an appropriate time. The Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar bilaterally later agreed to a repatriation scheme based, inter alia, on the principle of safe and voluntary return of refugees. The Rohinga refugee population in Bangladesh now numbers more than 260,000. A small number of families have returned, outside the supervision of UNHCR. No UNHCR role or presence is foreseen by the Myanmar side. The Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs have several times been in contact with the Foreign Minister of Myanmar, underlining the need for an appropriate United Nations role or presence in Myanmar to facilitate the safe and voluntary return of refugees. The urgency of a solution has been stressed by the Bangladesh authorities, who have expressed serious concern about the continued presence of such a large group of refugees in an already vulnerable and strained area of the country. DHA continues to monitor developments and to explore with the Governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh arrangements to expedite the safe and voluntary return of refugees.

54. The crisis in former Yugoslavia has increased in magnitude and complexity during the past year. DHA has been working in close collaboration with UNHCR, which has the leading operational role, and with other relief organizations including ICRC, UNICEF and WHO, to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict. On 29 July 1992, an international meeting on humanitarian aid to victims of the conflict in former Yugoslavia was held under UNHCR auspices in Geneva. The meeting adopted a comprehensive response to the humanitarian crisis in former Yugoslavia. On 30 July 1992, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs convened a meeting of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to address specific operational aspects of the Comprehensive Response. Subsequently, an inter-agency assessment mission was dispatched to former Yugoslavia to assess the humanitarian needs in light of the deterioration of the situation and in view of the coming winter. On the basis of the findings of the inter-agency mission, a consolidated appeal with an inter-agency programme of action covering the most urgent humanitarian assistance requirements was formulated for the period September 1992 through April 1993. The Consolidated Appeal was launched in Geneva and in New York on 4 September 1992. The Appeal covers the most urgent needs to be addressed through UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP and other organizations concerned for food, shelter and medical services including logistical support, amounting to $434 million. As of 22 October, funds and pledges of $258 million have been received in response to the appeal.

55. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs participated in the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia organized jointly by the United Nations and the European Community in London from 26 to 28 August 1992. On 9 October, the Working Group on Humanitarian Issues established within the

framework of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia held its first meeting in Geneva under the chairmanship of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

56. Since its inception, DHA has been following closely the evolution of developments in the Commonwealth of Independent States which were parts of the former Soviet Union. The fundamental changes that have taken place in this region have required structural adjustments and the rebuilding of political, economic and social institutions. The fragility of some of the newly established independent republics and their infrastructures has caused considerable instability and shortages in the supply of essential goods and services. The incidence of ethnic conflict and other forms of civil strife has placed additional pressures on the governments and societies in the area. A joint UNICEF/WHO mission, with the participation of UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WFP, visited 11 of the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States and three Baltic countries between 17 February and 2 March 1992. DHA is monitoring events, particularly the potential danger that basic needs for food, health and shelter may not be met in the months to come, and intends, in close cooperation with relevant operational organizations, to devise relief measures that would ensure that basic humanitarian needs are being met.

57. DHA has been seized of the situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan related to the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Following the mission last winter of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, it had become apparent that considerable humanitarian needs were unattended to and that assistance was strongly required. A second United Nations fact-finding mission, including a humanitarian component, visited the area in May 1992. As a result of the mission, relief needs have been identified in both countries. A limited appeal for funding for humanitarian assistance programmes is in preparation.

58. Following growing ethnic friction in Moldova, two United Nations fact-finding missions were dispatched to the area. The second mission visited Moldova at the end of August 1992 to promote efforts at defusing the tension in the country and to examine humanitarian needs.

59. As a result of the United Nations fact-finding mission which was dispatched in September 1992 to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, DHA was alerted to an impending humanitarian emergency which could result in the death of many innocent civilians, especially in the high-mountain region of Nagorno-Badakhshan. A large number of Afghan refugees who are affected by the turmoil in Tajikistan also need protection and humanitarian assistance. Efforts have been initiated to mobilize the necessary response to the urgent food and fuel emergency requirements there.

60. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world. The civil unrest has rendered much of the social infrastructure inoperative. The economic disarray and embargo have further aggravated the situation. DHA is currently consulting the Organization of American States and United Nations agencies in order to launch a programme of humanitarian assistance in Haiti.

IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

61. General Assembly resolution 46/182 established the principles, guidelines and instruments for the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system. While many concrete steps have been taken to implement the different provisions of the resolution, much remains to be done to translate the guidelines laid down in the annex to the resolution into practical arrangements.

62. Since its establishment, DHA has had to address and coordinate the response of the international community towards an increasing number of acute emergencies. In doing so, the Department has focused primarily on the following:

(a) Alerting and mobilizing support for emergencies which require the concerted effort of the international community;

(b) Preparing, in close cooperation with operational organizations and non-governmental organizations, programmes of humanitarian assistance and consolidated appeals;

(c) Convening pledging meetings and the necessary follow-up meetings to mobilize resources and to sustain and accelerate the support of the international community;

(d) Establishing, after consultations with specialized agencies, the necessary structure and modalities at the country level for coordination of humanitarian assistance in response to each emergency situation;

(e) Negotiating agreements with Governments and other concerned parties for access by operational organizations to people in need of humanitarian relief assistance;

(f) Monitoring the implementation of the humanitarian programme in each emergency situation and preparing periodic situation reports.

63. In order to carry out these responsibilities effectively, the Department must also adopt a number of related measures and address all the tasks envisaged in General Assembly resolution 46/182. These measures will enhance the overall capacity of the United Nations system to respond to emergencies, but would require increased resources. These tasks include:

(a) Serving as focal point for the collection, analysis and dissemination of early warning information pertaining to both man-made and natural disasters as well as assisting developing countries, upon request, with the establishment and enhancement of a national early warning system;

(b) Making appropriate arrangements with interested Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to enable the United Nations to have more expeditious access, when necessary, to their emergency

relief capacities, including food reserves, emergency stockpiles and personnel, as well as logistic support;

(c) Setting up an information system, drawing upon existing databases within the United Nations system as well as input from the field, in order to make available timely information in a consolidated manner to Governments, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations and other parties concerned with humanitarian assistance;

(d) Supporting special coordination units, such as those set up to service the Inter-Agency Standing Committee or to deal with reporting and coordination requirements of the Horn of Africa and southern Africa emergencies.

64. Experiences with the consolidated inter-agency appeal as an instrument for integrated programming and mobilization of resources have so far been very positive. Close coordination in the fielding of inter-agency assessment missions, collaboration in the collection and analysis of information, and prioritization of relief activities have provided a solid foundation for the elaboration of concise and informative appeal documents. The United Nations has benefited greatly from the active support of affected countries, donors and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations in this regard. At the same time, many lessons can also be drawn from these experiences.

65. While Governments have been supportive of a number of well-publicized consolidated appeals relating to the drought in southern Africa and former Yugoslavia, the response to the needs of the Horn of Africa as a whole has only been moderate, while the response to the needs of Afghanistan has been weak. In spite of the appeal of General Assembly resolution 46/182 to the effect that Governments should expedite the delivery of the pledges that they make in the context of consolidated appeals, no discernible improvement has been achieved and a considerable time-lag still exists between pledges and actual contributions. In addition, the earmarking of contributions for specific relief activities continues to limit the possibilities of a coherent humanitarian response to complex emergencies. One area which has received very little donor response in these consolidated appeals is projects for programme support and coordination.

66. The response to the drought in southern Africa reflects these problems. While response to target food aid has been generous, reaching approximately 75 per cent of the request, less than half of the programme food aid needed has been pledged. Response to non-food items has been very poor, reaching only 20 per cent of the target. This affects the capability of the affected countries to address their water and health needs, as well as agricultural rehabilitation. It should also be noted that the needs of some smaller countries are not as fully addressed as those of other countries in the consolidated appeal.

67. In light of these experiences, consideration should be given to ensuring greater flexibility for the United Nations to address in a more timely and coherent manner the overall requirements of each emergency situation. One option is for donors to fund a certain percentage of the consolidated appeal unearmarked so that the United Nations can utilize these resources to address the imbalances and constraints indicated above.

68. While the Central Emergency Revolving Fund became operational in May 1992 when pledges reached the target of $50 million, only $30 million has been received up to the beginning of October 1992. This situation should be rectified in order to maintain the viability of the Fund. So far, $11.1 million of the Fund has been utilized for emergency relief activities in Somalia and Kenya by UNICEF, FAO and WHO, and for providing support for the coordination efforts of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance to Somalia. It is expected that the Fund may also be used in the next two months to address shelter and clothing needs for many displaced people in former Yugoslavia as well as to address the urgent needs of the Winter Plan for Afghanistan.

69. Inquiries have been made concerning the utilization of CERF for activities which are not reflected in the consolidated appeal or for which no consolidated appeal is contemplated. A suggestion has also been made for the Fund to be utilized by implementing partners such as the International Organization for Migration. The financial and accounting procedures of the Fund have been established to ensure that it is maintained on a sound financial basis. This is understandable in light of the revolving nature of the Fund. There are, however, suggestions that the primary consideration of the Fund should be first and foremost to make possible a quicker response of the United Nations to emergencies, and that therefore there is a need for greater flexibility in its utilization. This is a matter which the General Assembly may wish to review in light of the experience gained so far.

70. The United Nations is working closely with the community of non-governmental organizations in order to ensure an effective and coherent international response to emergency situations. The Secretary-General convened a meeting with key representatives of the community of non-governmental organizations immediately after the establishment of the Department to elaborate its role and function and to discuss the modalities of cooperation. DHA has subsequently established arrangements for the association of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Department as well as for their involvement in the preparation of consolidated appeals. Representatives of non-governmental organizations are involved in the work of the DHA inter-agency support unit in Geneva and on a regular basis in the work of the DHA New York office. The 100-Day Action Programme for Accelerated Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia, launched at the coordination meeting at Geneva on 12 and 13 October, was recognized as an example of the partnership between donors, United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations. It is important to build upon this experience and to strengthen further the cooperation between the United Nations and the non-governmental organization community. Efforts would also need to be

continued to involve, as much as possible, indigenous non-governmental organizations.

71. Suggestions have been made to establish a "consortium" of non-governmental organizations so that smaller non-governmental organizations can pool their resources to work as implementing partners of United Nations organizations. Such a consortium could also enhance collaboration among the non-governmental organizations themselves. Consideration has also been given by some of them to strengthen coordination mechanisms among themselves and to define their role in relation to the mandates of the relevant United Nations organizations. These efforts could enhance cooperation and complementarity between the United Nations and the community of non-governmental organizations.

72. One important element emphasized in General Assembly resolution 46/182 is coordination arrangements at the country level. Other than in a very limited number of complex emergencies where the Secretary-General has appointed special representatives or coordinators, the United Nations Resident Coordinator is the representative of DHA in the country, serving as the team leader for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. This arrangement enables the United Nations to draw upon existing coordination mechanisms and support structures in each country. The Resident Coordinator would also play an important role in ensuring the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development. The Resident Coordinators, together with the special representatives/coordinators, must be provided with the necessary authority, capacity, and administrative and financial support by all concerned organizations in order to enable them to discharge effectively their respective responsibilities. DHA, together with UNDP and its operational partners, will undertake a review of coordination of humanitarian assistance at the country level. It is expected that a comprehensive set of measures relating to procedures and modalities for coordination, staffing and financial support, training and the development of emergency procedures for use in relief situations will be elaborated. The Governing Council of UNDP and the Economic and Social Council will be apprised of the outcome of this review in 1993.

73. DHA will undertake to intensify its efforts in early warning as envisaged by General Assembly resolution 46/182, drawing upon existing capacities of relevant organizations and entities of the United Nations system, national institutions of interested Member States and non-governmental organizations. As the United Nations seeks to streamline and improve its capacity for timely and coherent response to emergency situations, it must strengthen its capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate systematically early warning information on both man-made and natural disasters. Equally important, the United Nations must, in close consultation with all humanitarian partners, make the necessary arrangements to follow up and act on such early warning information. Although the guiding principles of resolution 46/182 provide a general framework in which humanitarian action is conceived, latitude exists for the further development of appropriate "trigger mechanisms" to enhance capacity of action in early warning situations. DHA is continuing to explore, in consultation with the political departments, how best to pursue this question in given

situations. In this context, DHA intends to convene ad hoc inter-agency meetings to undertake strategic planning as emergency situations evolve.

74. The United Nations has been called upon to respond to an increasing number of disasters and emergencies. This trend may well continue in the coming years. The staff and financial resources of organizations of the system have been stretched to their limits. The resources available to DHA at the time it was established have also been overextended. This became apparent when DHA was called upon to assume at the same time specific responsibilities in relation to the Horn of Africa, including Somalia and the Sudan, the drought in southern Africa, Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan. While the necessary resources to enable the Department to undertake the task in some cases have been included in the consolidated appeals, only limited resources have thus far been made available in this way. The Department faces increasing challenges to discharge in a timely manner essential functions such as the fielding of assessment missions, the preparation of consolidated appeals, the mobilization of resources, the establishment of appropriate coordination structure in the field and the monitoring of the implementation of humanitarian programmes. The resources available to various trust funds which have been taken over from UNDRO have been considerably diminished. Given the scale of the work which DHA is being called upon to undertake, especially in the increasing number of complex emergencies in which it is being asked to play a central role, additional resources are essential if its work is to be successfully accomplished. This matter deserves the consideration of the General Assembly.

75. A major concern that has become apparent with regard to humanitarian efforts in conflict situations is the security and protection of staff in the delivery of relief materials. Serious threats to the security of humanitarian personnel are routinely reported and an increasing number of relief workers have lost their lives while carrying out their missions. Relief convoys and supplies have been targeted for attack and looted. These unacceptable acts, in clear violation of international humanitarian law, must be condemned in unambiguous terms by the international community. While the United Nations and its partners are firmly committed to providing humanitarian assistance to all people in need, all measures must be taken to ensure the necessary conditions of security for humanitarian activities and personnel. In this regard the full cooperation of all parties concerned is paramount.

76. The United Nations is expected to be actively involved in complex emergencies in the years to come and the Organization should strengthen its capacity to deploy staff to undertake relief operations where there is a real risk to life. To that end, special attention would need to be given by the United Nations to recruitment policy, security procedures, training for relief personnel on risk management, developing a comprehensive system of communication, evacuation as well as insurance coverage. Further discussion on these issues among the organizations of the system as well as with Governments would facilitate the development of future policies and response capacity.

77. The need for respect of international and national law in the provision of humanitarian assistance is well recognized. While international humanitarian law is well established, continued and persistent efforts must be made to ensure its full compliance by Governments, and in situations of conflict, by all parties to the conflict. In addition, there remain other areas in which the possibility for progressive development of humanitarian law exists. Legal norms for the protection of humanitarian convoys and personnel in conflict situations is one case in point. Similar legal issues are presented with respect to access and the security of relief supplies. Greater clarity in these areas and adherence and implementation by all parties concerned would enhance the provision of humanitarian assistance in conflicts.

78. A notable new feature in the humanitarian activities of the United Nations has been the increased involvement of the Security Council in relation to its responsibilities. The Security Council has accorded humanitarian assistance high priority and has developed a number of modalities aimed at ensuring the safe and effective delivery of relief assistance to those in need. Within the Secretariat, DHA has worked very closely with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs in shaping the United Nations humanitarian response to complex emergencies where the Organization is called upon to provide simultaneously assistance in peacemaking, peace-keeping and humanitarian relief.

79. The Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) referred to the link between humanitarian assistance and peacemaking efforts. In the case of complex emergencies, humanitarian assistance is essential but should be complemented by measures to address the root causes of such emergencies through peacemaking and peace-building. Providing relief to the victims of conflict through effective humanitarian programmes can assist peacemaking efforts and may also contribute to preventing the further deterioration of conflict situations. Corridors of peace and zones of tranquillity and similar measures for relief delivery can thereby benefit peacemaking and other efforts to achieve peaceful settlement of conflicts.

80. The humanitarian agenda is a long and difficult one. The United Nations, and the international community as a whole, will need to mobilize maximum resources and capacity to contribute to the alleviation and solution of these problems. Humanitarian action represents an important potential for the United Nations in dealing with these complex issues. A careful balance is to be struck between the principle of sovereignty and the imperative to help human beings in desperate need in many parts of the world. By performing this task well, the United Nations can set an example for dealing with complex new issues in an effective, multilateral way.

81. The humanitarian imperative is and must be universal. It symbolizes the need to see the world as one, from the perspective of both solidarity and security. If the humanitarian task is seen not only in the light of immediate relief but also in the perspective of rehabilitation and development, we can

send a message of hope for afflicted people around the world and set a new direction for the United Nations at the end of the cold war.

82. Lastly, if the United Nations is asked to perform better and do more, in ever more difficult situations, it is essential that it be given the resources to do so. If not, there is a risk for the United Nations that the gap between expectations and resources may become dangerously wide. We must not lose the opportunities available to the international community through the United Nations to provide a better future and a life in dignity for all.